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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED at the
CORONATION
OF
KING GEORGE III.

AND
QUEEN CHARLOTTE,
IN THE

Abbey Church of *Westminster*.

September 22, 1761.

BY
ROBERT, Lord Bishop of *Sarum*.

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I KINGS X. 9.

Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

THESE words were addressed to Solomon, when he ruled over Israel in the fear of God, and his kingdom was established greatly.—We need not employ our reflections upon the history, which occasioned them: we need not enter into the reasons of the peculiar Providence, which God exercised over the Jews; or the special appointment of Solomon to the throne of David his father.—

The words convey a general proposition, full of Instruction; and correspond to that Providence, by which all Kings reign, and all Princes decree justice. They are not surely unworthy the attention either of the Prince or of the people; and may well claim our regard on this Solemnity, which affords ample matter for our best affections to work upon; which calls for our devoutest thanks to the giver of every good gift, for the blessings we already enjoy; and raises

2 Sam.
xxiii. 3.
1 King.
ii. 12.

Prov. viii.
15.

Jam. i. 17.

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in us a confident expectation of the continuance and increase of them.

The words lead us naturally to two important truths :

1st : That when great and good Kings reign, they are the means, by which God blesses a people.—It is not said, because the Lord loved *Solomon*, but *because He loved Israel, therefore made He Solomon king.*

2^{dy} : That the duty and end of Royalty is, *to do judgment and justice.*

Eccles. xv.
14.

Rom. xiii.
1.

The Supreme Governor of the world, constantly exercising his Providence in promoting the virtue and happiness of his rational creatures, put man under strong obligations of necessity, convenience and inclination, thereby to draw him into Society ; *and left him in the hand of his own counsel* to reap the benefits of it ; to form models of government, to enact laws, and pursue order, for the peace, safety and public good of mankind. For these gracious purposes, *all the powers that be, are ordained of God.* When these powers are separated from the public good, nothing can be more unnatural and destructive ; when united with it, nothing more just and

at the CORONATION.

and beneficial, and the true end of civil society is then only attained, when the people are blessed.

The merit of wise and righteous government must certainly redound to the honour of the person who administers it: the divine prerogative of communicating happiness and glory to a great people, of feeding *them with a faithful and true heart,* and ruling *them prudently with all his power,* must surely fill the mind of a Prince with that inward delight and satisfaction, that attend every act of a conspicuous and distinguished virtue; but the general utility is to the people: and however he may partake of their felicity; the difficulty, the disquietude, the constant care lie upon the Prince.

Pf. lxxviii.
73.

Is it a small thing to hold the reins of government, and direct its course, with ability and uprightness? Every considerate man must be sensible of the weight; and every honest man will endeavour to support the hand, that bears it. Supported and assisted it must be in the extensive concerns of a great kingdom: but the colour, the vigour, the consistency of public conduct rest chiefly upon the Prince himself.——

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To be acquainted with the connexions and dependencies of power, and to look through their force and consequences ; to protect a nation from foreign injury, and domestic disorder ; to execute law, to exercise authority, and secure obedience, by an uniform and well-tempered scheme of mercy and goodness, of truth and faithfulness, of justice and impartiality ; are matters of no ordinary skill and care. Solid principles of wisdom and virtue, enlarged views, a discerning spirit, strength and presence of mind, with constant application and watchfulness, are required to keep the sources pure ; from whence flow all the benefits of civil government and order.

Is it a small thing, to stand firm in so elevated a situation ? not to give way to the self-sufficiency of power, or the security of ease, or the allurements of grandeur, which too often pervert even the best dispositions of natural temper, and vitiate the heart ? to be superior to all the temptations, which so independent a station suggests ; and to avoid all the defects that diminish a great character, as well as those that corrupt a good one ? ———Whoever knows mankind, must allow the heart to be

be very resolute and stedfast in its integrity, which under such trials can pursue its course invariably towards the highest perfection.

Besides these difficulties which arise from the weight of government, and the hazard of moving amidst so many snares; other difficulties may occur in particular cases.——To succeed to a Prince, whose grave was just *covered with the unfeigned tears* of his happy and grateful subjects; who had long been accustomed to love and reverence him, as their common father and friend:——to succeed to a kingdom full of power and riches and honour; whose name stands foremost among the nations, and whose fame is raised to a pitch above the praise of former ages:——to succeed with the warmest expectations and inclinations of men of all ranks, interests, and opinions:——this undoubtedly affords a pleasing prospect; but at the same time it calls for all the faculties of an *understanding heart* to profit by these favourable circumstances; to maintain the affections of the people, the stability of the throne, and the glory of the Nation.

Mal.ii.13.

1 King. iii.
9.

Whoever looks through the appearances of things, must see, that even they, who are the worthiest and fittest to be instructed with Royalty, cannot be free from difficulty and care; and that the benefit does not accrue so much to them, as to the community. This is the purpose of Providence, thus to extend its blessings, and this purpose is in fact answered, in proportion to the goodness of the Prince. He bears the weight of government, that his subjects may live easy under it: he avails himself of the prerogative, and resists the dangers of his exalted station, that he may be a living law to them: and he exerts himself to act up to the glory in which he finds his people, that their security, tranquillity, and power may be *stablished, strengthened, settled.* To a just Prince, the difficulties will be rather a spur to action than a curb; because he will be ever warmly animated with the love of his country: his mind will be free and strong and constant, because it is pure: and he will found his dignity in that, in which alone it can really consist, in fulfilling his duty; in *doing judgment and justice.*

1 Pet. v. 10.

This

This is the second consideration arising from the words of the Text : *Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee King, TO DO JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE.*

The reason of things to an attentive mind makes it evident, that man cannot be set up on high above his fellow-creatures, merely for his own indulgence, dominion, and advantage.—External greatness, pre-eminence and honours are indeed due to all that are in authority, and should be maintained: and above all, when we look up to the Supreme Head, that is set upon the throne of a great kingdom, we naturally and justly pay the tribute of the most dutiful allegiance; and show constantly every mark of respect, submission and veneration to the sacred character. Yet no tribute, which a King receives, can be compared to the glory which the greatness of his own mind feels, in *doing judgment and justice.* This is a talent entrusted with a Prince, of which he must give an account: and it is a talent of the noblest kind, that can be committed into the hands of any of the sons of men: *for he is the minister of God* for the happiness of mankind

Rom. xiii.

4

Deut. iv.
6.

mankind : and in discharging this trust faithfully, will be his *wisdom, and understanding*, and dignity *in the sight of all nations*.

Phil. iv. 8.

This trust is best discharged, when those principles are cultivated, from which cometh order and every good work—To this end, a wise Prince, for his own as well as his people's interest, will give public honour to pure religion and virtue ; and, for their support, to knowledge and science, and every thing that is praise-worthy.—This conduct will give encouragement and life to whatsoever things are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report* ; will keep vice, infidelity and prophaneness in awe ; and thwart the selfish and dangerous designs of wicked men. The sentiments, the manners, the passions, the pursuits of many will take a right tendency : and whoever are bound by the tie of a well-informed conscience, will preserve a sincere respect to law, and a chearful obedience to government ; which, without that tie, no authority can command, no power can enforce. Such a conduct will raise the dignity of a Prince ; will constitute the genius, form the character, and
fix

fix the credit of a people : and steadily pursued, will produce happiness beyond this age to the community ; and to the individuals beyond this life.

A wise Prince will not only cultivate those principles, which strengthen the bands, by which every society is knit together : but he will also unalterably adhere to those means, and pursue those ends, which secure the foundations, and promote the benefits of the constitution, at the head of which he is placed.—If this happy lot fall in a country, where the Constitution in Church and State is founded upon the principles of purity and freedom ; and justly poised between the extremes of power and liberty : he will find himself cloathed with every degree of authority, that a heart well-intentioned can desire ; and at the head of a Constitution, the best formed to convey peace and happiness to mankind : and it will be easy to him, to make the law the rule of his actions ; as he measures his own interest by that of his people, and his own duty by the public good.—A free Constitution hath numberless depending motions, which are necessary to check each other ; and which
may

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may be sometimes stopped or disordered by the passions of men ; it requires therefore early, resolute and uniform vigilance in the administration of government : but these very checks mark out more distinctly the mutual interest of Prince and people, and necessitate both to pursue it, if they are true to themselves. In such a Constitution, the power of the Prince is not absolute, but sufficient for every right purpose, and which a great and good mind will delight in executing. The obedience of the people is the obedience of men, not slaves ; unforced and unfeigned ; and therefore the more honourable and more acceptable to an upright King : and the temper, the affection, the vigour which liberty inspires, will carry the dignity and greatness of a Sovereign to a higher pitch, than can be attained by any other principle of government.

When these public demonstrations of wise and righteous administration are strengthened by the Prince's personal example of love to true religion and to the constitution, the hopes and happiness of a people are built upon the surest foundation.—When a Prince acts under an habitual

bitual persuasion of his dependance upon God, he gives the strongest pledge of right and steady conduct towards man. A mind well-endowed, and a heart well-disposed, are not easily drawn aside into the *crooked* Is. lix. 8. *paths* of oppression or cunning ; but are rooted and grounded in true policy, which dispenses blessings all around. A character thus founded in virtue will *scatter away all* Prov. xx. 8. *evil with his eyes*, and will not only maintain a decorum in manners, so essential to dignity, but exact it insensibly and yet powerfully from others. Enlarged principles of sound religion will enable him to act with ease and firmness and honour in every occurrence ; and the efficacy of so eminent a pattern will insinuate itself thro' all degrees of men. When to compleat this amiable character, the love of the Constitution is known to be implanted in the bosom of a Prince ; this spirit will diffuse itself thro' all orders of his subjects, his example will secure it, his influence will improve it, his countenance will create emulation in every honest heart to perpetuate it ; and the fruit of this conduct will be mutual confidence, strength and glory.

When *he, that ruleth over men*, founds 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.
his

Pf. lxxiii.

I.

Pf. iii. 8.

his dignity in thus fulfilling his duty; *God is truly loving unto that nation, and his blessing is upon that people.*

When WE rejoyce in making the application, let us also seriously consider the duty we owe to the Almighty, who hath shewn this loving kindness to us; and the duty we owe to that Prince, who is the instrument in the hands of Providence to bestow these blessings upon us. But the most signal bounty of Providence, the most assiduous care and concern of a Prince for the public welfare, cannot make a corrupt, a dissolute, or an abject people happy. *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the mercy or the majesty of the Lord.* We must fear God, before we can create a confidence, that we honour the king with a stedfast heart. It behoves us to walk uprightly in both these paths of duty, which coincide; and to preserve a constant sense of due subordination, and a right conduct in our respective stations. Conscience, gratitude, and even self-love should prompt us to lessen the weight and heighten the dignity of the Crown: and should

II. xxvi.

10.

I Pet. ii,

17.

should incite us to co-operate, by all the means in our power, to maintain the cause of pure religion and virtue, of just government and liberty. ---- If we do not, we shall despise and defeat our own happiness; and the blessings offered to us will aggravate our condemnation.—But such fears would ill become this day. Let us promise ourselves better things: and let our present prayers to *the most High*, who *ruleth in the kingdom of men*, be the sincere pledges of our uniform and hearty endeavours, that the reign of the King may be one uninterrupted course of felicity to Him and to his kingdoms.

Dan. iv.
17.

What then remains, but to exhort you; and what can be more becoming this great and solemn occasion, than to offer up the most fervent supplications with one mind to Heaven; that the Holy Spirit of that God, in whose presence the King and People are preparing to declare their mutual engagements, may pour into their hearts a sincere zeal for each other's happiness, and unite them in the strictest bands of affection? May the sacred Oath, which our Sovereign takes at the Altar of the King of Kings, ever recur to his mind,
as

Pf. lxxxix.
14.

Pf. lxxii.
7.

Prov. iii.
16.

as the genuine intentions of his own heart !
May the Homage, which we pay him in
all truth and faithfulness, be bound upon
our hearts and minds with the ties of du-
ty, gratitude and love ! and from us, may
unfeigned loyalty spread itself thro' all
ranks, give a right temper to the conduct
of all his subjects, and establish his king-
dom ! *May justice and judgment be the ha-
bitation of his throne ! May mercy and truth
go before his face !* May the Almighty
mark every year with fresh instances of
his goodness to Him, and to his people !
May every happiness of private life alle-
viate the cares of Royalty ! and every
blessing of public prosperity, yea, and a-
bundance of peace be in his day ! Late may
He be called to an heavenly crown of
eternal glory ! And here on earth, through
the mercy of the Most High to these king-
doms, long with unsullied lustre may his
Crown flourish, under the guidance of that
Wisdom, *in whose right hand are length of
days and honour !* Amen.

F I N I S.

